

Summary: Alaska/Russia Climate Change Examination

Students from West High School in Anchorage, Alaska will collaborate in a three-year project with high school students from the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, Russia to research the effects of climate change in their regions and discuss the efforts teenagers are making to protect and conserve their environment. Students will interview Native Alaskan elders, scientists, and local and regional leaders throughout the three-year cycle. Interviews will center on the concerns that Alaskans have regarding climate issues. Russian students will conduct the same interviews in the Chukotka region. Students will simultaneously monitor the available weather data from the past 50 years in both Alaska and the Far East of Russia. Three groups of ten to fifteen students each who have prepared for this project in Alaska will travel to Anadyr each summer to exchange and compare their collected data with their counterparts. They will prepare for a joint presentation to be given at the Beringia Days Conference that year and for other public presentations. West High will invite students and teachers from the Chukotka region to come to Alaska in October 2008 to attend the Beringia Days conference. Over the next two school years, both groups will focus on youth efforts to monitor and conserve their environment and on how the sharing of their cultures and scientific evidence from both regions can expand and further their collective conservation goals. Students will develop plans for outreach and education of other young people in their region as they continue to make presentations on the project at the following Beringia Days conferences.

Introduction

Students at West High are conscious and active environmental community members. A number of students studying Russian at West High are already members of AYEA (Alaska Youth for Environmental Action). AYEA is a high school environmental education and leadership program of the National Wildlife Federation, which has been in operation since 1998, when six Alaskan teens decided they wanted an organized voice in national environmental policy. Now there are six chapters of AEYA in different towns and cities in Alaska. A number of Russian students are members of the six-year-old "Green Team," a school club that meets weekly and supports several projects within the school, including the collection of recyclables. Their sponsor, Sven Burglund, is particularly interested in helping the students with outreach to their Russian compatriots.

West High has a strong language and culture Russian program that has regularly traveled to western Russia in the past for three-week exchanges with Russian schools. Now American students wish to be a part of a project with Russian students who live in an area comparable to their own that will not only teach them about one another, but will help them become responsible world citizens.

The Chukotka College in Anadyr hosts a high school development program with many Native students from all over the Chukotka Okrug. Many students in the program live in small villages. These are students who plan to attend university in specific areas. Chukotka students focus on the English language, as well as science and math, and are looking for ways to use their English. Unfortunately, because of American visa limitations and requirements, most students from Chukotka will be unable to travel to

Alaska. West High will invite a small group to come to Alaska for the Beringia Days conference each year. Chukotka College has offered enthusiastic support of the project to date. The students want to participate in the interviews and research. The College is offering in-kind support of teachers and dormitory hosting of Alaskan students during their visit.

Students who work on the Alaska/Russia Climate Change Examination will share the unique perspective of those who live in the north, who will inherit critical results of climate change, so they will help to educate international students concerning their planet and its complex balance. They are deeply concerned about the current escalation of northern climate changes that range from glacial ice melting to loss of polar bear habitat to the destruction of northern villages. By sharing views and data with groups in both countries, students will be able to effect environmental conservation and protection. They want to make a difference in the regions where they will live and raise awareness about the problems and the potential to make a difference for those who will live in these regions in the future.

Goals/Objectives of the Project

Goal 1: Students will interview Native elders.

Goal 2: Students will give back to the Native Community.

Goal 3: Students will connect with their political leaders.

Goal 4: Students will acquire and share scientific data.

Goal 5: Students will interact with peers in local environmental groups and examine their methods, data, and results.

Goal 6: Students will collaborate with peers across the Bering Straits.

Goal 7: Students will participate in an international conference.

Goal 8: Students will plan for the future.

Goal 9: Students will give back to their home communities.

Scope of Work

Goal 1: Students will interview Native elders.

Students on both sides of the Bering Straits will ask a set of questions of their local elders. Some West High students are Alaska Natives who will link the group with Alaska Native elders. Alaskan students have prepared an initial list of questions that they have

submitted to the Chukotka team as a means for collecting responses. Both teams will use the same final list of questions for all contact groups.

Goal 2: Students will give back to the Native Community.

Alaskan students will share what they have learned when they participate in the yearly Alaska Federation of Natives conference. In the second year of the program, the Federation of Alaska Natives Conference will take place in Anchorage, and West High students will attend sessions on climate change. They will serve in panels to share the information they have collected over the past year.

Goal 3: Students will connect with their political leaders.

Project participants will share their interest in environmental issues with elected members of local and regional government by interviewing leaders of their local and regional government through their student-led interviews. Students will meet with local leaders concerning the environmental movement as well as with politicians, including elected public officials (in Anchorage: state and US representatives, Anchorage Mayor Mark Begich, Anchorage Assembly Members, and Governor Palin) to ask the series of questions in the Appendix.

Goal 4: Students will acquire and share scientific data.

Alaskan and Russian students will interview scientists to gather information about climate change. As students complete interviews, they will also collect weather data and organize it for presentation.

Goal 5: Students will interact with peers in local environmental groups and examine their methods, data, and results.

Students will contact environmental groups to learn what activities are most important to them and what outcomes they expect from those activities. Students will interview Russian and Alaskan youth environmental groups to learn what opportunities for participation and leadership are available to teenagers. They will observe and document the success of current efforts in their communities.

Goal 6: Students will collaborate with peers across the Bering Straits.

Alaskan students will hold face-to-face meetings with their peers in Anadyr. A limited number of those peers will be able to return the visit.

Alaskan students will prepare presentations in Russian to be able to share their results with community groups when they travel to Anadyr. Similarly, students in Anadyr will prepare their presentations in English. Each group will help the other, communicating to compensate for linguistic and cultural differences. Students will format the project in written form for publication as well as in electronic presentation form for public presentations.

Goal 7: Students will participate in international conferences.

Each autumn over the course of the project, Alaskan and Russian students will present their findings at the Beringia Days conference. Having prepared their presentation in two languages, **the Alaskan/Russian Climate Change Examination** members will take the

group's presentation to the Beringia Days Conference in Fairbanks in October, 2008. Russian students will lead the presentation the following year in Anadyr, while Alaskan students will head the group when the conference moves back to Alaska in the final year of the project.

Goal 8: Students will plan for the future.

As students work together in Anadyr on the **Alaskan/Russian Climate Change Examination**, they will plan specifics of the next year's research. They will monitor news agencies for details on climate change and continue to meet with youth environmental agencies. Each year, a group of students will meet in Anadyr to exchange data, set new goals based on observations and practice, and plan for future presentations at the Beringia Days Conference and in public schools and universities.

By spending three years working in different collaborations of Alaskan and Russian students, **Alaskan/Russian Climate Change Examination** participants will recognize that their work will affect the future. Each student participant will pledge to volunteer at least five hours in one of the environmental groups contacted, or will work to start a new environmental group in the community.

Goal 9: Students will give back to their home communities.

Students will use their contacts to request teaching from Native singers and dancers in the local community so that they can take songs and dances to their counterparts. The students will also develop materials so that they can share the project with younger children who are just starting to learn English and Russian. In Anchorage, this sharing will take place primarily at Romig Middle School and Turnagain Elementary School, which hosts the Russian immersion program. Program participants will work with the teachers to support existing science curriculum appropriately.

During the second two years of the project, both the Russians and the Alaskans will make at least five presentations in local elementary-level classrooms in their native language. In Anchorage, students will also collaborate with Turnagain Russian Immersion program teachers to make presentations in Russian for the elementary students. Students will add a cultural sharing component to their experience, learning Native songs and dances in order to then teach their counterparts.

Products derived from the project

Project Environment will develop the following products:

- Digital images of meetings between students and Native elders.
- Digital images of meetings with elected officials.
- Digital images of students working with environmental groups.
- Digital images of students volunteering.
- Digital images of meetings in classrooms and schools.
- Digital images of Russians and Alaskans collaborating.
- Annual status report in both English and Russian.
- Popular article about the project, in both English and Russian.
- Electronic presentation on the project, in both English and Russian.

- Electronic presentation geared for children in both English and Russian.
- Public presentations at Beringia Days Conferences.
- Public Presentations at Chukotka College, Anadyr Public Schools, and Anchorage Elementary and Middle Schools.
- Public Presentation in Russian at Turnagain MIR Russian Immersion Program.

Year 1 descriptions	Beringia fund Request	In-kind contributions	Comments
Two teachers: work on project plus two weeks' summer		200 hours Volunteer hours by teachers in Russia and Alaska	January to October, 2008
One administrator		100 hours Anchorage school district volunteer	Accompanying administrator required by Anchorage School District
Visa fees		\$100/student (\$1,400.00) Families pay	Anchorage students for travel to Russia
Travel: Bering Air charter	\$19,900.00		Alaskans travel to Anadyr from Nome, summer 2008
Travel: Alaska Airlines		\$5,000.00 Families contribute \$500 each	Alaskans travel to Nome from Anchorage, summer 2008
Housing		\$50/night per Alaskan student in Russia (\$7,000.00) Chukotka College	provides dormitory space free of charge--summer 2008
Food		\$100/week/Alaskan student in Russia (\$2,800) West High Alumni	Funding in progress
Materials/technology/ gifts to Russian hosts		\$2,000.00 West High Russian club monies	Students fund raise
Travel: transport 4 Russians to Alaska for Beringia Conference, fall 2008	\$6,000.00		
Travel: Russians from Nome to Fairbanks	\$1,000.00		
Housing: Russians and West High students		\$1,600.00 Host families in Fairbanks provide	
Food and travel: West High students to Beringia Conference, fall 2008		\$1,000.00 Students and families purchase.	
Total	26,900.00	20,800.00	

Year 2 descriptions	Beringia fund Request	In-kind contributions	Comments
Two teachers: work on project plus two weeks' summer		200 hours Volunteer hours by teachers in Russia and Alaska	January to October, 2009
One administrator		100 hours Anchorage school district volunteer	Accompanying administrator required by Anchorage School District
Native Alaskan dance teachers, 2009	\$500.00		To teach cultural dances and songs to share in Russia.
Visa fees		\$100/student (\$1,400.00) Families pay	Anchorage students for travel to Russia
Travel: Bering Air charter	\$19,900.00		Alaskans travel to Anadyr from Nome, summer 2009
Travel: Alaska Airlines		\$5,000.00 Families contribute \$500 each	Alaskans travel to Nome from Anchorage, summer 2009
Housing		\$50/night per Alaskan student in Russia (\$7,000.00) Chukotka College	provides dormitory space free of charge--summer 2009
Food		\$100/week/Alaskan student in Russia (\$2,800)West High Alumni	Funding in progress
Materials/technology/gifts to Russian hosts		\$2,000.00 West High Russian club monies	Students fund raise
Travel: transport 4 Alaskans to Russia for Beringia Conference, fall 2008	\$6,000.00		Alaskans travel to Anadyr for 2009 Beringia conference
Travel: Alaskans from Anchorage to Nome	\$2,000.00		
Housing: West High students and teacher		\$1,600.00 Host families in Anadyr provide	
Total	\$28,400.00	\$19,800.00	

Year 3 descriptions	Beringia fund Request	In-kind contributions	Comments
Two teachers: work on project plus two weeks' summer		200 hours Volunteer hours by teachers in Russia and Alaska	January to October, 2010
One administrator		100 hours Anchorage school district volunteer	Accompanying administrator required by Anchorage School District
Native Alaskan dance teachers, 2009	\$500.00		To teach cultural dances and songs to share in Russia.
Visa fees		\$100/student (\$14,000.00) Families pay	Anchorage students for travel to Russia
Travel: Bering Air charter	\$19,900.00		Alaskans travel to Anadyr from Nome, summer 2010
Travel: Alaska Airlines		\$5,000.00 Families contribute \$500 each	Alaskans travel to Nome from Anchorage, summer 2010
Housing		\$50/night per Alaskan student in Russia (\$7,000.00) Chukotka College	provides dormitory space free of charge--summer 2010
Food		\$100/week/Alaskan student in Russia (\$2,800) West High Alumni	Funding in progress
Materials/technology/gifts to Russian hosts		\$2,000.00 West High Russian club monies	Students fund raise
Travel: transport 4 Russians to Alaska for Beringia Conference, fall 2010	\$6,000.00		
Travel: Russians from Nome to Anchorage	\$1,200.00		This assumes that the 2010 conference will be in Anchorage
Housing: Russians		\$800.00 Host families in Anchorage provide	
Total for 2010	\$27,600.00	\$19,000.00	

Year	Beringia Grant Request	In-kind	3.64% administrative costs	Total request from Beringia	Total Project Costs
2008	\$26,900.00	\$20,800.00	\$979.16	\$27,879.16	\$48,679.16
2009	\$28,400.00	\$19,800.00	\$1,033.66	\$29,433.76	\$49,233.76
2010	\$27,600.00	\$19,000.00	\$1,004.64	\$28,604.64	\$47,604.64
				\$85,917.56	\$145,517.56

Appendix A: Some ideas for guiding questions:
(Chukotka Okrug students will add to these.)

- 1) Are there indications in your region that the climate is changing?
 - a. Are you aware of scientific data that show change?
 - b. Have you noticed changes in your region personally?
 - c. Is this a topic of discussion in groups you meet?

- 2) Have you noticed any changes?
 - a. Are there effects on humans?
 - b. On animals?
 - c. On vegetation?
 - d. On natural resources?

- 3) What do you expect will happen if these changes continue/increase?
 - a. On a local level?
 - b. On a regional/state level?

- 4) Are you aware of efforts to combat these changes?
 - a. What personal measures are people taking?
 - b. How are groups attempting to affect change?
 - c. Are there widespread measures to affect change?

- 5) What would you like to see happening?
 - a. Is the current level of activity sufficient?
 - b. Does the level need to change? If so, how?

- 6) Is there legislation connected to these issues?
 - a. How much monetary support will be necessary?
 - b. Who is moving forward on environmental issues?
 - c. What can teens do to help?